

2004 West Virginia Commercial Fruit Survey

Survey Purpose

Data were collected, analyzed and summarized to provide the West Virginia fruit industry and others with a timely, unbiased and factually based portrayal of the State's major fruit crops. Information within this publication will illustrate changes which have occurred since the last comprehensive study in 1994. Variety, age, county and tree/vine count statistics have been compiled for the major producing counties. Additionally, rootstock information was collected for apples.

Survey Procedures

West Virginia Agricultural Statistics maintains a list of fruit growers for the purpose of making annual apple and peach yield, production and disposition estimates. With the dynamic nature of operating arrangements, on-going list maintenance is essential to ensure the most complete coverage possible. Operator/operation names not maintained by West Virginia Agricultural Statistics were also mailed a questionnaire to determine if they produced fruit within the State.

Target Population

The 2004 Orchard and Vineyard Survey was an enumeration of all known fruit producers in West Virginia. Operations were classified as "commercial", if they had one or more of the following: Noncitrus fruit – 100 or more bearing age trees; Grape vines – 500 or more bearing age vines; Bushberries – 1 or more acres. All operations meeting the commercial orchard definition for any fruit were included. Growers living or headquartered out-of-state with fruit acreage within West Virginia were contacted and orchard data were included. Growers were asked to provide tree inventory numbers by county where trees were located. Multiple county fruit growers were also counted as growers for each county in which they maintained an orchard. These growers were only counted once in the State total. Therefore, the sum of the county or district growers may be greater than the State total. Data collection began in October 2004.

Data Collection

A total of 541 potential fruit growers were contacted during the survey. Of these, 101 qualified as a "commercial" producer. Also, growers were asked to list the names of up to four nearby producers. These names were matched against the survey list. Any name not on the list was mailed a questionnaire or contacted in person.

Operations with fruit acreage exceeding 200 acres were contacted for a personal interview during November and December 2004. The remaining growers were mailed a questionnaire during this time period. Non-respondents were enumerated by telephone or contacted by field enumerators. This publication represents categorical summaries (i.e., no expansions were necessary).